

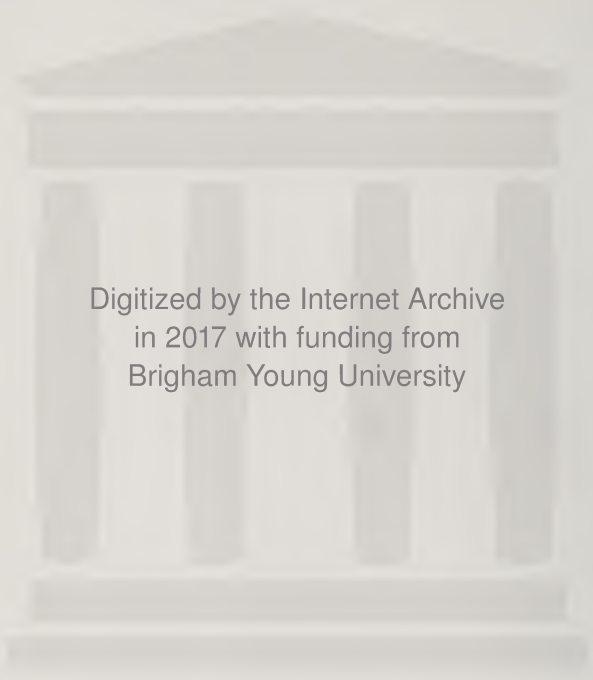
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S E R M O N .

MATTHEW XXIII. 8.

AND ALL YE ARE BRETHREN.

WHEN Columbus spread his sails to explore the western ocean, it was his theory, and his hope, that he might find in that direction, a passage to those Indies which had been already discovered. He little dreamed that, in accomplishing this, he should become the discoverer of a new world. We honor the sagacity and the enterprise of the great navigator; but we also adore that Providence, which, through the mists of his uncertain and imperfect theories, not only revealed a new hemisphere, but brought to light the figure and extent of the globe on which we dwell, and freighted his ships with its moral and political destinies. Highly and justly as we honor his name, how little did he comprehend those results of his voyage which even yet but begin to be realized, and which must swell in interest and in magnitude till the end of time! He had in view the extension of commerce and of science; but God had in view the discovery of a refuge to which his church might flee when she should be persecuted, the extension of human liberty, the subversion of thrones and dynasties, and the transfer of the seat of empire.

When our Fathers, with no less of fortitude and of sagacity, in the midst of prayers and of tears, with their

wives and their little ones about them, started, not on a voyage of discovery from which they hoped to return laden with glory, but intentionally severed forever the ties which bound them to their country, and sought, beyond the ocean, a wilderness for a home, they had in view religious freedom, the right education of their children, and the extension of the true religion among the savages. Little did they think, that out of their sacred sense of obligation to instruct their children, there should extend among millions a more equal diffusion of knowledge than the world had ever seen—that by the side of that religious liberty which they chiefly sought, and springing from the same root watered by so many tears, there should shoot up a tree of civil freedom, which should refresh a continent by its shade—that with the extension of their principles and institutions, there would be new combinations of the political and social elements, which should test and establish the capacity of man for self-government, in which the glare of all adventitious distinctions should disappear before the rights and the worth of individual man, in which the great principle of equality—equality before God through the one Mediator, and equality before the eye of impartial law—should be established, and in which there should be an approximation in society more near than had ever been known before, to that brotherhood of the race, that state of equality and affection which is the only one suited to Christian people, and which is indicated in that far reaching annunciation of the text, “And all ye are brethren.” Columbus sought a passage to the Indies, and God revealed to him the whole rounded inheritance which he created in the beginning, and intended for the use of civilized man. Our Fathers sought for religious freedom, and God led them on to the practical recognition of those principles laid down by Christ, in accordance with which alone man can obtain that political and social and moral

inheritance of which his nature is evidently capable, and which we believe God intended for him.

It is not, therefore, merely to honor men, that we celebrate this day. We look back to the event it commemorates as a great historical epoch—the opening of a new era to this continent, and to the world; and much as we honor the agency and the persons of the Pilgrims, we see far higher reasons for recognizing the hand, and celebrating the agency of the Pilgrims' God. Well then may we come, in sympathy with the spirit of our Fathers, to a *religious* celebration of this day; and far distant may be the time, when, under the pretence of honoring their virtues, it shall be desecrated by those scenes of sensuality and of frivolity into which such occasions sometimes degenerate, which would offend even the piety of the present day, and which we might almost expect would stir the bones of those godly men, and call them up from their rest of centuries to rebuke the degeneracy of those who should claim to be their descendants. If, however, such a time should ever come, it would not be the first instance in the history of the world, in which the tombs of the prophets have been built, and the sepulchres of the righteous have been garnished, by those of a very different spirit.

And not only do we wish to celebrate this day in the spirit of the Forefathers, but followed as we are by the representatives and spiritual descendants of those who persecuted them and drove them hither, and told as we are by them, that our churches are no churches, our ministers no ministers, our sacraments no sacraments, our marriages no marriages, and, while they lack as yet that power of persecution for which their system has such an affinity, only given over to the "uncovenanted mercies of God," we wish to reaffirm, on this consecrated spot, the principles of the Puritans, to thank God that their blood runs in our veins, and to encourage each other to

stand fast in that liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free ; while yet we would learn, in their application to those who vilify us as well as to others, the full import of those words of our Saviour, “ And all ye are brethren.”

The term brethren, as used in the text, indicates equality and affection, and the proposition which I suppose it involves, and which I propose to illustrate is, that the form of society contemplated by Christianity as best adapted to the nature of man, its ultimate and most perfect form, whether manifesting itself through the church or the state, will be one of which these two elements shall form the basis. This topic I regard as appropriate to the present occasion, because a state of society which should be moulded under the full influence of these principles, would be the matured fruit of which the enterprise of our Fathers was the bud. Without themselves seeing their full extent, or admitting all their consequences, these seem to have been the great guiding ideas under the influence of which they acted.

In considering the proposition, that equality and affection must form the basis of a perfect society, the main inquiries will be, first, how far it is sanctioned by the Scriptures ; and secondly, how far it is in accordance with the nature of man. Before entering upon these points, however, it may be well to ascertain what we mean by equality as here used. And first, we mean by this nothing that will imply a disregard of any relation constituted by God. The family state is an ordinance of God, intended to train men for society here, and for heaven. The inferiority it implies is inevitable, and is under the guardianship of a natural affection which would make the highest good of the parent and the child identical, and would secure that of both in the most effectual way. The more perfectly the rights and duties growing out of these relations are regarded, the better will those

who are, not so much members of society, as in a state of training to become so, be qualified to enter upon their wider and more responsible duties in such a way as to guard and perpetuate a true equality. Of this relation of the family to the state, and of family subordination to ultimate equality, our Fathers were well aware ; and hence their great care in family instruction and government. Nor, again, does equality imply any disregard of natural endowments, or of eminent qualities ; any want of perception of those varieties of character on the ground of which, while we are to treat all men with benevolence, we are yet to have a higher respect for some than for others. It would be as easy to stop the flowing of the tides when the moon draws them, as to stop the tide of honor and respect which sets towards true worth in a free community. Nor, will equality imply that every man shall have an equal amount of knowledge, or of property. These, aside from moral character, are the great means of influence ; but if we make men equal in these to-day, they will either cease to be so to-morrow, or you must put cramping irons upon society that would destroy all freedom. Equality of condition could result only from the most arbitrary rule, and the grossest injustice.

What then does equality imply ? Simply that every man shall have an equal right to use the faculties and means of happiness which God has given him, as he pleases, provided he does not interfere with the rights of others. It would imply the largest liberty of the individual that would not make liberty minister to anarchy and injustice. It would also imply in the constitution of society the absence of any thing artificial, whether an order of nobility constituted by the state, or a self-constituted secret society, which should divert the currents of wealth or of influence from those natural channels in which they would otherwise flow. This would open a career to every man, would leave every man free to shape

his own destiny, and would enable him to find his true place in society. This, too, would bring individuals together by affinities that would most beautify and strengthen society, just as matter will crystallize into its most beautiful and compact forms only when its particles can move freely among themselves. We cannot suppose it was intended that society should lie in regular and unchangeable strata one above the other, with here and there a monarchical elevation upheaved ages ago by some political earthquake. Equality would rather require that each individual should be as a separate drop of water mingled with a homogeneous mass, in which each particle is subject to the same laws, and each finds an equal facility in coming up to the light and warmth of the surface. It would not be necessary that each particle should actually be at the surface an equal length of time, but we would have no horizontal partition drawn through the ocean to prevent the drops beneath from rising ; nor would we have the surface congealed into an aristocracy to prevent the free action of the waters below, and the access to them of the air and the sunlight.

The idea of equality, then, would simply require the largest liberty to the individual that would be compatible with the good of the whole, and a constitution of society which should present no obstacle to an interchange of places among its members, when that would be produced in consequence of the honorable efforts, or of the character and personal qualities of individuals.

Equality thus understood, is the democratic and centrifugal element in society, and it is the great mistake of many to suppose that the attainment of this is all that would be necessary to its perfect state. Demagogues flatter the people, that nothing more than this would be necessary to bring in a political millennium. But certainly nothing could be worse than this, without some aggregating force, either from without to press, or from

within to draw, individuals together. It is the right centripetal and constituting force that is chiefly needed, and if one can be found which shall not only be compatible with individual liberty, but which shall be strong as a bond of union just in proportion to the enlargement of that liberty, then the great social problem of the harmony of individual freedom with the unity and efficiency of governmental and social action, will be solved. But the solution of a problem whose conditions are so apparently incompatible, was not left to human wisdom. It furnishes another example of the simple yet exhaustless wisdom of Christ. In the affection and brotherhood everywhere inculcated by him we have precisely such a principle, and the only one possible. It must be borne in mind, therefore, in our discussion, first, that it is not every kind of equality for which I contend ; nor, secondly, any kind of equality standing alone ; but an equality of rights, balanced by an affection based upon principle, which should constitute society a brotherhood.

We are now prepared to inquire how far such a state of things would be either required, or permitted by the Scriptures.

And here we are ready to say, that we do not suppose that the Scriptures have laid down as indispensable, any one form of government, either in church, or in state. This they could not have done wisely, because different forms must be required as the individuals composing society have greater or less power of self-government. The general method of the Scriptures is to make the tree good ; to strike not at this or that particular form of wickedness, but at its root in the alienation of man from his Maker : and they take it for granted, that when they have made all the individuals who compose society, honest, and benevolent, and pure-minded, and disposed to submit to all lawful authority as ordained of God, the forms in which

that authority will be administered will be brought, without difficulty or violence, into a correspondence with the pervading spirit of the community. Hence, while we are to look for no specific form of government as laid down in the Bible, we may properly inquire what form would be most congenial with the spirit which it inculcates, and with its ultimate aims.

But, on this point, can there be a difference of opinion? What can be the meaning of the text, taken in its connection? "But be not ye called Rabbi; for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon the earth; for one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters; for one is your Master, even Christ. But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant." It may, indeed, be said, that this was addressed to the Apostles only, and that it proves nothing more than the doctrine of ministerial parity, and the utter incongruity there is between both the letter and the spirit of the New Testament, and that assumption of authority, whether spiritual or temporal, by which those who have claimed to be the ministers of Him who was the impersonation of meekness and love, have domineered over, and persecuted his church. But if we suppose this passage to refer more particularly to ecclesiastical relations, let us turn to a passage in the twentieth chapter of this same gospel, which certainly does not refer to these, and both together will cover the whole ground. We there see, in two of the disciples, the anxieties and intrigues of a spirit which was looking forward to temporal power. This was the object they had in their thoughts, and must have been the object our Saviour had in view in his rebuke to them, and in his more general instructions. Hear, then, the words of our Saviour, spoken under circumstances to give them special weight, for we are told that he *called* them unto him, and said, "Ye know that the princes of the gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that

are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you : but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister ; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant : even as the Son of man came, not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." Here we find the true foundation of the highest greatness, and a perception, which can be accounted for only on the supposition of a divine wisdom, of the true relations of the governing and the governed.

But if any one should still choose to say, that Christ had no reference in any case to political regulations, that he abstained wholly from all connection with civil government ; yet no good reason could be assigned why the same principles which are wisest and best in one relation, should not be carried out into others. Why should not a Christian state, if indeed the church would not become the state, be fashioned after the model of a Christian church, as Moses was directed to make the earthly tabernacle after the pattern showed him in the mount ? Doubtless our Saviour looked forward to the time, when there should be, what there are not now, and probably never have been, Christian governments, whose acts should express the will of a nation of Christians ; when there should be the only union of church and state that would be desirable, when every magistrate, and every subject, should be a true member of his church, and thus the laws of his house, and the affection of Christian brotherhood, should comprehend and modify the relations of ruler and people. In that case society would become instinct with the power of self-government, virtually a theocracy, whose *Shekinah* would take up its abode in the conscience of every man ; and whose civil government, when its functions should be required, would be simply the organism which the public life would form for itself, not for the protection of rights, or for internal control, but for the

accomplishment of public ends. In the nature of the case, a true religion, doing its work fully upon each individual, must pervade every thing by its spirit. When the waters of the sanctuary, which are now but to the ankles of society, shall rise and swell as they must, they will become an ocean for it to swim in.

Without, therefore, going into an extended and critical argument from the Scriptures, inappropriate to the time, and to the occasion, suffice it to say, that they contain nothing contradictory to the spirit of the passages which I have now quoted. In them the assumptions of popery, and the spirit of high-churchism, in all its forms, find no countenance, and they are mentioned only to have placed upon them the ban of prophetic denunciation. Coming to individuals, and doing its great work upon them as the subjects of God's government, and doing a similar work upon each, by which all become actuated by similar motives, attached to similar objects, and assimilated to one great model, Christianity will necessarily constitute a strong bond of union, and promote a spirit of brotherhood and equality among men. If, therefore, we may not say that the Scriptures require, we are entirely safe in saying that they permit, a state of society which should be based on equality and affection, and that this would best harmonize with their general spirit.

We are now prepared to inquire, how far the proposition laid down as involved in the text, is in accordance with the constitution of man.

When I speak of the adaptation of a form of government, or of society, to the constitution of man, I mean by it, its adaptation, not to aggrandize individuals or classes, not to promote any selfish end, but to call out his faculties most fully, and to promote, in the highest degree, the individual and social good of the whole. That different forms of government are required by man in the great

variety of states in which he is found, I readily admit ; I admit also that there is in him a great flexibility and power of adaptation to these forms, so that individuals may perhaps reach equal perfection under them all, but it is hardly probable that any two will be equally favorable to the highest culture and best good of a whole people.

I observe then, first, that that form of government would be most in accordance with the constitution of man, which should best secure those conditions in connection with which individual and social man may attain most fully his end.

Government is not an end, but a means, and no government can be a good one, which does not propose to itself, and secure the true ends for which a government ought to be instituted. It is not among the chief of these ends, to promote, directly, the prosperity of a people. That must arise from the active principles of their nature rightly directed—from their intelligence, and industry, and virtue. Where these are wanting, there can be no prosperity, and it is the business of government to secure those conditions through which these shall be most fully elicited, and have the widest scope. Any government which does this, whatever its form, may be regarded as a good one, and any one which does not do this, is not a good one.

The conditions which a government ought thus to secure, I suppose to be, first, the personal liberty and equality of which I have already spoken. This would involve the tenure of property by freehold, and an absence of all enactments in regard to both property and rank, which should prevent these from following their natural laws, as dependent upon individual character and exertion.

A second condition would be, a general, and as nearly as possible, an equal diffusion of knowledge in the community.

A third condition would be, security. It is not enough that the persons and property of men, may be, and per-

haps as a matter of fact, are, let alone. What is needed is, a feeling of security that they will be thus let alone while men demean themselves as good citizens. This feeling may be destroyed quite as effectually by the spirit of mobs, as by the caprice, or avarice, or tyranny of a single individual. There are indeed numerous reasons why one tyrant is to be preferred to many.

A fourth condition is, a cheap and prompt administration of justice, when the rights of person or of property are violated.

I mention as a fifth condition, religious freedom—the practical recognition of the great doctrine that God is the sole lord of the conscience. This may be said to be involved in the condition first mentioned; but on this spot, on this day, as well as from its intimate connection with civil liberty and all high culture, it demands a separate place. Religious Freedom! This has been the starting point and support of civil freedom, from the day when an apostle uttered those memorable words, “We ought to obey God, rather than men,” until now. Where this is, in connection with the free circulation of the Bible, there civil liberty will be. Where this is not, there, in this age of the world, civil liberty will not be. The power that can bind the conscience, that strong man of our nature, will enter in and spoil the whole house. Religious Freedom! The rights of conscience! Even yet so little understood, so partially enjoyed! For this it is that the race now sighs and waits, and the birth-throes of which, for the whole world, shall be the next general convulsion of the nations.

Let these conditions exist, and if a people do not become prosperous and happy, no earthly power can make them so. But while I admit that these conditions, or the most of them, are possible under widely different forms of government, and of course that these, and not the forms, are to be mainly regarded, it is yet clear that they would be

much more likely to exist in connection with some forms than with others. How has this been hitherto? Have these conditions been secured to the mass of men by the governments that have existed? Let history answer. Nothing can be plainer, than that the interests of the governments, and of the people, have been regarded, not as identical, not as merely separate, but as opposite. The end of governments has been, either to strengthen themselves against the people, or to make them subservient to their plans of avarice or of ambition. The great cause of this, undoubtedly, has been that general corruption of our nature, and proclivity of it to evil, from which it results that the characters of men are so much more generally formed by their temptations than by their duties. While this remains, no perfect remedy can be found, and hence we are never to forget, that our most hopeful labors are those in which we seek to change the character of the mass, by casting in the leaven of Christianity. Still, as a wheel can be so made as to turn under water by the force of that very water which we should suppose would prevent its motion, so something may be done by wisely balancing against each other the natural principles of action, and by such adjustments, that even selfishness itself shall often bring its weight to bear at the same point with patriotism, and thus aid in giving to the wheel of government an energetic and equable motion.

This point must certainly be most fully reached in a *republic*, where the people choose their rulers for a limited time, and where the rulers are not only responsible to them, but return to mingle with them, and to be themselves subject to the laws which they have made. It is as if every physician should be obliged, after having prescribed for his patient, to take the same dose himself. This might not increase the amount of virtue in the profession, but it is very possible that it might sometimes modify the practice. Hence, while monarchy, with its

necessary subordination of ranks, would foster throughout the community a love of irresponsible power, and would facilitate its abuse, a republican equality, when once sufficient intelligence and virtue can be reached by the people to base their government upon it, will hold that dangerous passion in check. Hence, too, while this equality would seem to be the state towards which the elevation of the mass must tend, and which must be reached in a perfect state of society, it would also seem most likely to secure those conditions on which the progress of society towards such a state must depend, and therefore to be most in accordance with the constitution of man.

I observe in the second place, that that form of government will be most in accordance with the nature of man, which shall, as far as possible, control men by an appeal to the higher, rather than to the lower principles of their nature.

Plainly there are two methods by which men can be controlled. The one is by fear. This has been adopted by most governments hitherto. By appealing to their immediate and supposed interests, the rulers have attached to themselves in the form of standing armies, a portion of their subjects, and these they have employed to keep the remainder in fear. But where fear, and interest, are the highest motives known, the action of the government can have no tendency to elevate the people. Fear is a principle which man has in common with the brutes; but if man is to be governed as man, it must be by an appeal to his distinctive nature—to those faculties which make him man. Hence the second method of controlling men, is through their affections, acting in subordination to their rational and moral nature. Fear is a force that presses from without, and in this respect finds no analogy in any of those agencies by which nature builds up her beautiful and organized structures, or carries on her grand operations.

It is attraction, that forms the crystal, that keeps in its place every particle of the body, and that holds the orbs of heaven in their appointed path. But affection is the attraction of the moral world, and if any government is ever to move on with the harmony and beauty of the planetary system, it must be by a central force drawing the affections of the people to itself, and holding every man in a bright path of patriotism from which he would not willingly escape. Let a government share the warmest and best affections of the people, and who does not see that it would be the strongest possible, and would call into activity for its support, and strengthen, the best powers of our nature? How then can a government become thus strong in the affections of its people? Not through names, and forms, and preambles, and written constitutions; not by the right of ignorance, and corruption, and scoundrelism, to choose their own rulers in their own likeness; not even by that inalienable right of good men to believe professions before election and to be disappointed afterwards; because every government has been, and will be, far more a government of men than of constitutions. It can only be, by having for rulers, great men after the type of greatness indicated by our Saviour, and thus establishing the true relations between the rulers and the ruled.

Hitherto the world has called those great men, who have attracted attention to themselves, and accumulated in their own hands power, and wealth, and influence. He who could command the admiration of men for his prowess or his talents, who could control, by fear, large masses, has been called great. I will not deny that he is so; but there is a greatness of another order. It is one which takes for its principle and motive, not the attracting to itself of the objects of ambition, but, in the forgetfulness of self, the diffusion of benefits. It is one which will not hesitate to make sacrifices, and to lay down life

itself for the good of others, "even as the Son of man came, not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." Now when a disposition to make sacrifices, and to do extensive good, instead of skill and power to appropriate what is good to themselves, shall be taken as the standard of greatness, and when great talents shall find their highest exertions in this direction, then the people shall see in such men an impersonation, not merely of the principles of their constitution, but of the goodness of God, and millions will be ready to bare their own bosoms to danger, before they will suffer a hair of the head of such an one to perish. This affection would evidently be the strongest where the benefits and the liberty conferred were the greatest; and thus the problem would be solved—to construct a government that should be strong and efficient in proportion as it should be free. The feeling which has existed in this country, and still exists, towards Washington, is some illustration of the affection which would be given to a government administered for ages as he would have administered it. Who can estimate the strength of those bonds which would hold a virtuous people to such a government? Who will say that a government so constituted, would not be in accordance with the nature of man?

But however fully governments may secure the conditions specified, and with whatever affection they may be regarded, still, as institutions by which character is to be moulded, and the powers of the intellect are to be called forth, there may be great room for choice among different forms. Hence, I observe once more, that that form of government will be most in accordance with the nature of man, which shall tend most fully to quicken and invigorate the intellectual powers.

These faculties acquire strength only by activity—and it cannot be a matter of indifference whether all the

complex questions relating to the structure and administration of government shall be thrown before the people for their free and practical discussion, or whether the movements of the government shall either be veiled in mystery, or, at best, be like those of the stars, which the speculative may study and admire, but concerning which they have no responsibility, and over which they have no control. Whether, therefore, we consider the nature of the questions involved in the theory of government and in practical legislation, or the immediate interest of every man in those questions, nothing, except the Christian religion, can be better fitted to quicken and strengthen the intellect, and to elevate a people in general intelligence, than a free and full discussion of those questions by each individual, under the responsibilities of one whose vote may turn the scale in their practical decision. Hence, a government like ours is not merely a government, but a great school for the discussion of questions relating to the interests, and rights, and duties of social man. And these discussions will not be those of the philosopher in his closet, who regards every lever in the machinery of government as inflexible, and the ropes in its pulleys as having no friction, and who will persist in attempting to make his theories fit the actual condition and wants of the people when they will not fit; but they will be the discussions of earnest, practical men, who know their own wants, and who, though they may be mistaken for a time, will not be likely to sit down quietly under a system that does not practically work well. They may consent to be bound for a time with the new ropes and green withs of political abstractionists, and of party organization, but when the cry of interest or of want rings in their ears, they will break them "as a thread of tow is broken when it toucheth the fire." All this may, indeed, tend to turn the attention too much to what is sometimes regarded as alone practical—to the

material and sensible interests of society, but where a pure Christianity prevails, the higher nature of man will assert its claims, and thus all our wants, as intellectual beings, will be met. The English and American character is undoubtedly what it is in practical power, and in its leading and growing influence among the nations, because it has been formed in such a school. How very different is this character from that of other nations! How different from what it would have been, if the people had had no part in the government; and if, as is generally the case where they have not, they had not been allowed a free discussion of its measures!

Whether, then, we consider the conditions it secures, or the principles to which it appeals, or the faculties it excites, I think we may say that a government and state of society based on equality and affection, would be more in accordance with the nature of man than any other.

In presenting these views, I advocate no theory of abstract right, and no application of any principle to society in its present state, farther than would be warranted by a sound discretion. Let not the child encumber itself, and incur ridicule, by attempting to wear the garments of a man. Let not society be allured to part with any available safeguard, or practical good, for the outward forms of a perfection, the reality of which can become possible only through changes of individual character. But while there are tendencies on the one hand towards an impracticable and jacobinical equality, unbalanced and uncemented by principle and affection, and while, on the other, it is painfully evident that those principles which lie at the foundation of the different ranks in church and in state in the old world, are active here, so that those are not wanting who would prefer that order of things, my wish would be, that those who guide the vessel that embosoms all our hopes as a nation, might lift up their eyes to that beacon light kindled by

the Bible, which was seen so clearly by our Fathers, and which alone can guide us to a land where the people may "dwell in a peaceful habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places." When will men learn, that it is only "the work of righteousness" that shall be "peace," and "the effect of righteousness" that shall be "quietness and assurance forever"?

But, to the form of government and of society here presented, it is objected that it would be incompatible with the right culture of a spirit of reverence, and loyalty, and subordination; and also that it must produce a dull and prosaic level of society unfavorable to the development of any high poetic feeling. Each of these objections, would the time permit, might well demand a separate answer; but since reverence and poetic feeling are often excited by the same qualities, or by those which are allied to each other, the same general remarks may apply to both.

Far be it from me to say any thing that would diminish aught from the genuine reverence which any human being might otherwise feel in the presence of God, or his works, or towards those institutions of society which were ordained by Him; or that would despoil society of one grace which the unperverted eye of a poet might find there. Far rather would I add to these, till the fittest emblem of life should become the hymn, in which the highest worship is blended with the highest poetry. Are, then, these objections valid? In my view, it might as truly be said, that the destruction of idolatry and polytheism, and of the old mythology, tended to destroy the principle of reverence, and to diminish poetic feeling, as that the destruction of any artificial form of society must necessarily do this. Indeed I cannot help feeling that there is an analogy between these two cases which deserves attention, and that what the spiritual system of the Bible, and the Newtonian system of the universe, are

to the old system of heathen mythology, just that are our simple forms of worship, and society, and government, to those in which there are pompous rituals, and hereditary distinctions, and entailed property, and orders established by law.

Let us look at this. How beautiful was that mythology! How adapted to inspire reverence! How did it people heaven, and earth, and ocean, with its creations! How did it give sanctity to every grove, and hill-top, and fountain, and garden, and fires de, by enshrining there some god or goddess peculiar to the place! How did it furnish materials for sculpture and painting, and enable poetry to clothe its conceptions of the powers of nature in forms available to the imagination, so that men are found even at this day, and those too who have read David and Isaiah, who think it necessary to defend the works of God as if they might not be as well adapted to poetry as these fables! Again, how adapted, in one sense, was all this to human nature? Look at the antiquity and extent of the system. See the ancient people of God forsaking his altars, and going up to the groves and high places. See the whole world, from the polished Greek, to the equally polished Hindoo with his three hundred millions of gods, going after this system, and only the remnant of a single nation holding fast to the spiritual worship of the one God. Was not this conclusive evidence that the one was adapted to human nature, and the other not? Was it possible, then, to give up such a system as this, that had woven itself in with all the time-hallowed associations, and kind feelings, and joyous occasions of life, for Christianity, that had no temple, no altar, no priest, no sacrifice, no incense? What votary of taste, or of the muses, could endure the thought? But Christ and his Apostles, who knew what was in man, and what was truly adapted to his nature, seem to have been utterly unaffected by all this fine sentiment and fine

reasoning. They struck down the false system, and in the shock of its fall, if never before, were revealed the loathsomeness and corruption which had been concealed, with Satanic skill, under the forms of poetry and of art.

But see the affinity of human nature for this system still—greater even than that which it has shown, and is still showing for monarchy and caste in its various forms. No sooner had Christianity triumphed, than precisely the same system, under different names and forms, was introduced into the Christian church. The identical image of Jupiter became the image of St. Peter, and the Virgin Mary and the saints took the place of the local divinities, the Christian teacher degenerated into a priest, and the sacrament of the supper became a sacrifice. Certainly there is a sense, a bad sense, in which this system is adapted to human nature, and so adapted that I must think that that nature would have been forever crushed beneath its weight, but for the direct interposition of God. In the Reformation that interposition was manifest; it was manifest in the event which we celebrate to-day; and now we can see how infinitely superior is the foolishness of God to the wisdom of men—how infinitely higher, and deeper, and purer, is that reverence which connects itself with the simplest forms of Puritan worship, in which man goes directly to God through the one Mediator, than that which is connected with bells, and incense, and burning lights, and relics, and pictures, and changes of vestments.

But precisely the same arguments, in their basis certainly, and often in their form, which may be and have been used for the old and the new forms of paganism and idolatry, are those which are used in favor of monarchy, and of a distinction of ranks in society. Is one of these adapted to human nature? So is the other, and in precisely the same way. Has one, antiquity and the example of the mass of the race in its favor? So has the other;

and the arguments for both are based on the incapacity of the people to preserve the spirit of reverence, and to perceive beauty in connection with simple forms, and without constant and imposing appeals to the senses, and to the principle of association as connected with sensible things. Of course these systems are allied to each other. Everywhere, except indeed in this country, established religious orders have favored or upheld established orders in the state; and monarchy was never truer to its instincts than when it uttered the sentiment, "No bishop, no king."

Was it then possible, that at the word of one who had not where to lay his head, and who expired on the cross, the magnificent system of the Jewish hierarchy and temple worship should come down; and that by the same word the temples, and rites, and priesthods of heathenism should disappear; and yet the principle of reverence be safe? So thought our Saviour. And shall we fear for it because our Fathers followed his example, and so attempt to prop up the spiritual heavens which he has created? Shall we fear for that principle in the state, because the venerable form of Law, despoiled of none of her divine beauty, but with added benignity on her brow, comes to us as the expression of the concentrated wisdom of the state, rather than as the irresponsible mandate of an individual seated upon an hereditary throne? No; let a religious people find themselves blessed by the power and presence of God in their religious institutions; let an intelligent people find themselves protected in their rights by their civil institutions; let a social people find themselves united in their affections as neighbors and fellow citizens; and the plainer and simpler the garb in which the forms of these divinely appointed institutions shall be clothed, the more will they venerate those great realities which the forms express, and see in them an analogy to those simple but mighty energies by which

God governs his physical creation. Our Fathers never went against the principle of reverence. They sustained it most fully. No man can better understand the danger to which institutions like ours are exposed in this direction, or the true principle of their safety, (that is the recognition of God in them,) than did that remarkable man, the Rev. John Robinson. Hear him in his advice to those who first came over. "Lastly, whereas you are to become a body politic, using amongst yourselves civil government, and are not furnished with any persons of special eminency above the rest to be chosen by you into office of government, let your wisdom and godliness appear not only in choosing such persons as do entirely love and will diligently promote the common good, but also in yielding unto them all due honor and obedience in their lawful administrations, not beholding in them the ordinariness of their persons, but God's ordinance for your good; nor being like the foolish multitude, who more honor the gay coat than either the virtuous mind of the man, or glorious ordinance of the Lord. But you know better things, and that the image of the Lord's power and authority, which the magistrate beareth, is honorable, in how mean persons soever. And this duty you both may the more willingly and ought the more conscionably to perform, because you are, at least for the present, to have only them for your ordinary governors which yourselves shall make choice of for that work." The great principle of this advice New England has always adopted. If we distinguish reverence from blind submission and superstition, there is no country on earth where this principle has been so well sustained. But then we think there are some things which are so great, that they make their highest impression when they stand most alone. We do not think that a crown placed on the summit of Mount Washington, would add any thing to its sublimity; far less do we think it would have added any

thing to the simple grandeur of the character of him from whom that mountain has its name. We believe that there is enough in God and his works, seen as they are ; in the institutions of society regarded as his ; and in men fairly estimated ; to keep alive the principle of reverence ; and we are willing to leave intelligent and Christian men to make their own estimate.

Reverence and order being thus secured, we have no fears that there will not be enough of variety, and of poetic feeling. We should as soon fear a want of variety in the circlings and movements of a flock of swallows thrown into the free air ; and poetic feeling, whatever form it may assume, will live and find expression wherever freedom is, while nature and man remain the same.

The civil institutions of our Fathers having attained the ends of government, no one now questions their legitimacy. It is fully conceded that a body of men associated for the purposes of government and attaining its ends, are a State. But it is not conceded by all that a body of Christians associated as a church, and so far as man can see, attaining its appropriate ends, are a Church. Hence the course of our Fathers is objected against as schismatical. But on what principle were they schismatical ? As we understand it, on the same principle with some of old, who determined to serve God without regard to the abuses and corruptions of a national church, and who, in consequence, "had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonment ; they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword : they wandered about in sheepskins and goat-skins ; being destitute, afflicted, tormented ; (of whom the world was not worthy :) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth." These men were not persecuted by the heathen, but by the nominal church—the established church—by that people upon whom came "all the righteous blood shed upon the earth

from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, son of Barachias, whom they slew between the temple and the altar." Ah! that is the place—as it were between the temple and the altar—where many a righteous man, under the name of a schismatic, has been slain in the name of God, by the scribes, and pharisees, and hypocrites of his day, who have claimed to be the only true church. Between the case of these men and that of our Fathers there is a striking analogy, and we wait for a definition of schism that would make our Fathers schismatics, and would not make these worthies equally so—that would not make Christianity itself, and the Reformation, schisms—that would not make schismatics of all the martyrs with whose blood the Romish church has been drunken all down the ages—that would not make schismatics of the English martyrs under the bloody Mary. No idea can be more utterly baseless than that of any one organization which can be called *the church*, from which, when it should become greatly corrupt, it would be a sin for true Christians to separate, that they might associate on the principles of the Bible. The sin of schism consists in causing divisions in single churches, and not at all in coming out from a corrupt general organization not recognized by the Scriptures, for the purpose of following Christ.

Allied to the objection just mentioned, is another, that our Fathers had not sufficient regard to the historical development of the church—that they went directly to the Bible, and back to primitive times, and made no account of the experience and progress of the church for seventeen centuries. There is a class of thinkers who seem to suppose that the great object for which the world stands, is what they call progress. By this, they do not mean the progress of a great experiment upon human nature, by which its corruptions and opposition to God, and the great goodness and forbearance of God, are brought out in every conceivable form; but they mean

something, it would be difficult to say precisely what, that would be compatible with all the awful and long-continued defections and corruptions, both of the Jewish and of the Christian church. It is true that our Fathers received the Bible alone as authority, and regarded the apostolic age as the purest age of the church. But few men ever lived, as it would be easy to show, of a more truly liberal and catholic spirit than Robinson. Neither he nor his church intended to separate from any thing good. They believed in the unity of the church, they wished communion with all true Christians, and though they may have misjudged in some things, yet they rejected nothing rashly and fanatically, which had been handed down by history or tradition. These principles on which they thus acted, we regard as the true principles ; we adopt them, and intend to abide by them.

The institutions of our Fathers, then, having for their basis, both in church and in state, the idea of brotherhood—of equality and affection—not only exist, but have a right to exist. They have been tested, now, in various forms, on this soil, for more than two hundred years ; and imperfectly as their true spirit has been perceived and exemplified, and great as have been the disturbing forces from the continual and prodigious influx of incongruous elements, we are willing to bring them to the scriptural test, and to judge them by their fruits. Where has God been more generally feared and worshipped ? Where has the Sabbath been better observed ? Where has education been more generally diffused ? Where have the people been more enterprising, or accumulated wealth more rapidly ? Where has there been greater security of person and of property, and more kind neighborhood ? Where has justice been more ably and impartially administered ? Where have the triumphs of invention and of the useful arts been more signal ? Would it not have required all the faith of our Fathers to believe it, if by some magic glass, the summit of Saddle mountain,

more than two hundred miles distant, had been pointed out, and it had been revealed to them that these triumphs should be so great, that in a little more than two hundred years, one should start on the morning of the shortest day in the year from beyond the base of that mountain, and the next morning be on Plymouth rock, joining in the celebration of the event of their landing? Where have the poor, and the blind, and the insane, and the imprisoned been more kindly and wisely provided for? Where, finally, has there been more enlightened and self-denying labor for the conversion of men, and for their spiritual good, and more benevolent activity in sending the gospel over the world? How different are these from the fruits realized in any Catholic, or despotic country!

And if such have been the fruits of these institutions hitherto, how does it become us to understand their spirit, and to see that they are sustained in their purity. In the nature of things the capabilities of these institutions for good or for evil, are greater than those of any other. I take a single man. I see him an intelligent, virtuous, Christian man, able to control himself, and disposed to do unto others as he would that they should do unto him. I see him looking up to the heavens above him, awed by their greatness, and regarding the whole of this frame work of nature as one august temple for the worship of Him whose presence fills it all. I surround this man with a family. I give him a wife suitable for such a man—one whose object it has been, not to attract admiration to herself, but who, while she has seen in the expanding flower, that opens every petal to the sun and sends from every one its fragrance, the duty of cultivating and bringing out every latent capacity, has yet done it for the glory of Him who gave those capacities, and that she might make others happy. I see their children around them, affectionate, obedient, well instructed. I see them, when the glad Sabbath comes, going up to the house of God together, with the common feeling that they are

strangers and pilgrims here, and that they seek a city which hath foundations. Are there such families? I think there are. I know it is within the capabilities of our nature that there should be. But if there may be one such family, there may be two; and if two, then a neighborhood, then a town, then a county, a state, a nation. A nation of such men would realize my idea of the people. Let such a people be organized as their wants might require, for the expression of their opinions, and the exertion of their united energies for great public ends, and there is no object in nature, not even the heaving ocean, so sublime as their intelligent, deliberate, united, constitutional action. Such a people could never need, could never suffer the exertion of arbitrary power. Such is the picture which hope paints for the future, when she looks at the capabilities of our institutions, and at the power of God through his gospel.

But there is another picture, the reverse of this. In that, instead of a people, you have a populace. Let now, among an unprincipled populace, the sense of religion either degenerate into a mad superstition, or all idea of any thing to be truly revered become a mockery; let the Sabbath be disregarded, and of course become pre-eminently a day of wickedness; let the marriage tie become virtually dissolved, and family affection cease; let selfishness, and dishonesty, and sensuality, and hate, find none but outward restraints; and suppose a nation of such men shouting the watchwords of liberty and equality, with no power to come between their will and its accomplishment, and you have a state of things compared with which the worst monarchy that ever existed would be a blessing.

This is the picture which despondency points at when she sees iniquity in high places; when she sees slavery yet wielding its lash, and extending its area in this land of professed freedom; when she hears of the increase of crime, especially among the young; when she sees the

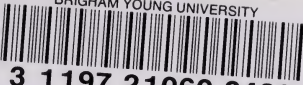
pertinacity of many in tempting and ruining their fellow-men for the sake of gain ; when she hears ignorant and foolhardy boastings about a democracy which some would either identify with Christianity or substitute for it ; when she sees the narrowness and madness of sectarian and party feeling and strife.

Which, then, of these pictures, shall be the true one ? Perhaps neither, in all the depth of its coloring ; but which shall predominate in its leading features ? If the former, I believe it can be only because the descendants and representatives of the Puritans shall hold fast, I will not say to Puritan principles, as if they belonged exclusively to them, but I will say to the principles of the Puritans. Let us seek no other basis for our institutions. Let us all, high and low, rich and poor, learned and unlearned, in the fear and in the love of God, seek to carry out this great principle of brotherhood. Whatever is incompatible with this in the spirit and forms of our institutions, let us seek to remove. It is this which has swept slavery from the soil of the Puritans, and which we ought to labor with every energy to infuse, till it shall sweep every vestige of that dreadful curse from this land. It is this which will open the heart of the rich when he remembers his poor and struggling brother, and which will send unasked relief. This it was that dictated the following extract of a letter dated just one year ago this day, from one who has done many greater things, but few more characteristic. "This splendid morning," says he, "opens upon us with such lessons as should make us of the old Puritan, Pilgrim stock read, reflect, and act upon them as their descendants, that when we are summoned hence, the word may be, 'Come up.'" This letter enclosed one hundred dollars to aid poor students in those unseen struggles with which so few prosperous men sympathize. This deed, both in its benevolence, and in the regard it indicates for education, was truly puritanical ; and springing as it did from influences originating on this spot, I think it proper

to mention it on this spot, as an example of that spirit of brotherhood which the text would inculcate. Let the spirit of this act prevail among the different classes of society, and it would be as oil upon the agitated waters; the chief evils connected with the necessary diversity of condition among men would cease; and everywhere, and always, men would meet each other as men, and as brethren.

And now, my friends, is not the star of hope which we see in this direction, a beautiful star? It is no meteor of a fervid imagination, or of a false philosophy. It is that great idea of a universal Christian brotherhood, pointed out by Christ, not in the text only, but everywhere, as an inherent part of his system. This star our Fathers saw, and is it any wonder, that under its inspiration and guidance, they should come across the ocean? Literally they found a landing here, but figuratively, the vessel which they launched is yet upon the deep, the multitude of their descendants is on board, and we too catch glimpses of the same bright star above the troubled waters. It may be that this vessel is not destined to reach the port. We hear moanings of the tempest, and see aspects of the elements which lead us to tremble for her. But where the bright image of this star has once fallen, it can never be effaced. This is our star. To it let the prow of our vessel be turned. Let every man be at his post, never ashamed of the plain rigging of his good ship, but always hearing that voice of duty, and of the God of our Fathers, which will speak above the roar of every tempest; and then, if our ship must go down, the will of God be done. But *then* she will not go down. Then the hand that guided the Mayflower, will guide her. Then will there be One on board, as we believe there always has been, who, though he may seem for a time to be asleep in the hinder part of the ship, will yet come, when the winds are loudest, and the waves are highest, and say, "Peace, be still."

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